

Bruce Berline, Esq.
Law Office of Bruce Berline LLC
Security Title Building
Isa Drive, Capitol Hill
P.O. Box 5682
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone: (670) 233-3663
Facsimile: (670) 233-5262
Email: bberline@gmail.com

Aaron Halegua
AARON HALEGUA, PLLC
524 Broadway, 11th Floor
New York, New York 10012
Tel: (646) 854-9061
Email: ah@aaronhalegua.com

Attorneys for Plaintiff

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS**

JOSHUA GRAY,

Plaintiff,

v.

IMPERIAL PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL
(CNMI), LLC,

Defendant.

Case No. 19-cv-0008

**DECLARATION OF CHRISTOPHER
CRANEY IN SUPPORT OF AN
ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE
AGAINST IPI AND HOWYO CHI**

Hearing date: n/a

Hearing time: n/a

Judge: Hon. Ramona V. Manglona

I, CHRISTOPHER CRANEY, hereby declare:

1. I am over eighteen years of age and am fully competent to testify to the facts set forth in this declaration.¹

¹ The defined terms herein have the same meaning as in the Memorandum of Law in Support of Plaintiff's Petition for an Order to Show Cause, unless otherwise noted.

Inadequate Security

IPI's Liquor

2

1 10. In doing an inventory of IPI's Liquor, my colleague and I carefully counted and documented
2 every bottle to prepare for it to be auctioned. After we had moved an item to the lobby floor and
3 inspected it, the bottles were then moved into the storage rooms behind the Tapachau bar.

4 11. As reported in the inventory submitted by Clear (ECF No. 282), my colleague and I counted
5 61 bottles of Macallan No. 6 (including 37 bottles that were in full boxes), 73 bottles of Moutai 30-
6 year, and 56 bottles of Moutai 50-year.

7 12. On Thanksgiving Day, November 23, 2023, my colleague and I counted the Macallan No.
8 6 again, which was still on the lobby floor and had not yet been moved to the storage rooms, and
9 there were 61 bottles. We left the Casino at approximately 1 p.m. that day. **Exhibit A** is a photo of
10 the Macallan No. 6 boxes on the lobby floor.

11 13. Two days later, on Saturday, November 25, 2023, the driver for Chairlady Lijie Cui, who
12 is named Ming, sent me a text message that some customers wanted to view the liquor. I saw his
13 message hours later, and replied that viewing of the liquor would start the following week and that
14 I would let him know.

15 14. On November 27, 2023, my colleague and I returned to the Casino at 10 a.m. and counted
16 the liquor, including the Macallan No. 6. We discovered that two (2) of the full box bottles were
17 missing. We checked other storage locations and counted again. Still, two bottles were missing.

18 15. I reported the two missing bottles to one of IPI's security guards, Darlene Navidad. She
19 informed me that Ming had visited the Casino on Saturday, November 25, 2023 with some other
20 people, and they were touching the bottles of whiskey. Navidad then reported the missing bottles
21 to Howyo Chi, who advised Navidad to call the police.

22 16. When the officers from the Department of Public Safety ("DPS") arrived, I showed them a
23 sample of the Macallan No. 6 in a full box and told them that Ming had been present at the Casino.
24

1 The DPS officer provided me a DPS reference card containing a case number, which I am attaching
2 as **Exhibit B**. To my knowledge, DPS has not yet found the missing Macallan No. 6.

3 17. Because two bottles were stolen, Clear had to reduce the number of Macallan No. 6 bottles
4 that would be available for sale in the auction.

5 18. My understanding has always been that IPI was responsible for ensuring the security of
6 IPI's Personal Property, including the liquor. Nonetheless, given the poor job that they were doing,
7 Clear decided to put a padlock on the door to each of the storage rooms holding the liquor.

8 19. If one is facing the doors to the two storage rooms, the hinge on the door on the right side
9 ("Right Door") was broken. **Exhibit C** is a picture of the hinge of the Left Door. **Exhibit D** is the
10 broken hinge of the Right Door. On the Right Door, the screws attaching the hinge to the wall are
11 entirely exposed, which means that someone can simply unscrew the hinge and remove it, even if
12 the lock remains fastened.

13 20. In late December, 2023, close to the Christmas holiday, I had asked IPI's Security
14 Supervisor Darlene Navidad and a maintenance employee to fix the broken Right Door so that the
15 hinge could not simply be unscrewed. I previously tried to fix it myself, but my drill was not
16 powerful enough. IPI never fixed the Right Door.

17 21. On January 24, 2024, the Court approved the sale of IPI's Liquor to Leader Capital
18 Development Limited. (ECF No. 287).

19 22. On February 26, 2024, at approximately 3 p.m., I discovered that 12 bottles of the 50-year
20 old Moutai and 5 bottles of 30-year old Moutai were stolen from the closet behind the Right Door.
21 I reported the missing Moutai Bottles to IPI's security officer Nikki Ada. On Wednesday, February
22 28, 2024, I reported the stolen Moutai to DPS. I gave a statement to Officer Ernest K. Terry, showed
23 where the Moutai was being stored, and showed photos of what the bottles looked like. DPS gave
24 me a reference card, which I have attached as **Exhibit B**.

Exhibit A

IPI Main Entry Security Post Hotel 2



Exhibit B

DPS Reference Card

Criminal Records : 664-9072
Detectives : 664-9042
Traffic Section : 664-9084/85/87

Case No.: 24-001301 Date: 02/28/24
Officer's Name: TERRY, K. EREMES Badge No.: 26
Type of Complaint: 1601

ATTENTION

RETAIN THIS CARD. It is IMPORTANT. You will be requested to provide the information on this card whenever you contact the Department of Public Safety.

DPS Reference Card

Criminal Records : 664-9072
Detectives : 664-9042
Traffic Section : 664-9084/85/87

Case No.: 23-007429 Date: 11/27/23
Officer's Name: Janio Jeyu Badge No.: 65
Type of Complaint: 1601

ATTENTION

RETAIN THIS CARD. It is IMPORTANT. You will be requested to provide the information on this card whenever you contact the Department of Public Safety.

Exhibit C



Exhibit D

